

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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----- 051598

R 081615Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6615

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1564

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MASS, DM, CH, CU, KN, UR

SUBJ: DAHOMEY MOVING LEFT?

1. TWO OR THREE STEPS ARE REPORTEDLY IN THE WORKS WHICH COULD RESULT IN GIVING DAHOMEY A MORE LEFTIST ORIENTATION. FIRST, ACCORDING TO FRENCH AMB, THE MRGD HAS REQUESTED TECHNICAL ADVISORS FOR ITS ARMED FORCES FROM CUBA, NORTH KOREA AND USSR. RATHER THAN ACTUAL MILITARY EXPERTS, THE AMB BELIEVES THE REQUEST IS FOR ADVISORS TO TRAIN ARMED FORCES CADRES AS "POLITICAL COMMISSARS" ABLE TO MOBILIZE REVOLUTIONARY IDEALS. THE AMB COMMENTED THAT THE MRGD OBVIOUSLY HAS NOT CONSIDERED THE CONSEQUENCES THIS MIGHT HAVE REGARDING THE CONTINUED ROLE OF THE FRENCH MILITARY ADVISORS WITH THE DAHOMEAN ARMY. THE FRENCH STILL HAVE ABOUT 15 MILITARY ADVISORS HERE.

2. FOR THE MOMENT THE MRGD IS PIQUED WITH PRC BECAUSE THE CHINESE HAVE AGREED TO SUPPLY NEIGHBORING TOGO WITH A SUGAR
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REFINERY. AS THE DEPT IS AWARE, DAHOMEY WANTS A SUGAR REFINERY

VERY BADLY. TO SHOW ITS DISPLEASURE, MRGD DID NOT ALLOW ANY MINISTERS TO ATTEND THE PRC NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION OCT 1, AND REPORTEDLY ARE GOING TO GET TOUGH WITH THE CHINESE HERE. A MINISTERIAL MISSION WILL GO TO PEKING BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR TO SEE WHAT MORE THEY CAN GET OUT OF THE CHINESE. DESPITE THIS TEMPORARY DIFFERENCE, THE FRENCH AMB BELIEVES THE MRGD LOOKS TO CHINESE IDEAS AS A GUIDE FOR FUTURE.

3. ON THE INTERNAL SCENE, IT APPEARS THAT A CABINET SHAKE-UP WILL TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. PLANS TO EXPAND THE NUMBER OF MINISTRIES AND REMOVE SOME OF THE MORE MODERATE MINISTERS REPORTEDLY ARE AMONG THE STILL SECRET DECISIONS TAKEN DURING THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC SEMINAR IN JULY. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES, THE NEW CABINET WILL INCLUDE THREE NEW MINISTRIES, INCLUDING A MINISTRY OF PROPAGANDA GEARED TO MOBILIZING THE MASSES FOR THE REVOLUTION, THE PRESENT MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMY MAY BE SPLIT INTO TWO SEPARATE MINISTRIES. THE NEW MINISTERS WILL BE SELECTED FROM AMONG THE YOUNGER "PROGRESSIST" (LEFTIST) OFFICERS LOYAL TO THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR AIKPE.

4. COMMENT: OVER PAST TWO YEARS MRGD HAS BEEN CAUTIOUSLY AND SLOWLY LEADING DAHOMEY TO THE LEFT. THE END RESULT COULD BE A REGIME AS FAR LEFT AS ANY IN AFRICA. THE FRENCH SEEM WILLING AND ABLE TO LIVE WITH THIS PROSPECT AND SO CAN WE. US INTEREST IN DAHOMEY ARE VERY LIMITED AND DO NOT APPEAR THREATENED. OUR PRINCIPAL CONCERN WOULD BE FOR THE EFFECT ON ANY EVENTUAL US PRIVATE INVESTMENTS IN DAHOMEY. IN GUINEA, WHICH FREQUENTLY SERVES AS A MODEL FOR THE MRGD, US BUSINESS INTERESTS SEEM TO HAVE FARED WELL. IF KEREKOU REMAINS IN POWER, THE DRIFT LEFT WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE ALONG AT THE SAME SLOW PACE. SHOULD AIKPE TAKE OVER, THE MOVEMENT WOULD ACCELERATE AND HIS STYLE WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE OBJECTIONALBE.
CHESHES

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